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SUBJECT: SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS: PM ASSERTS BAHAMAS WILL
NOT BE NAMED IN STOP TAX HAVEN LAW

REF: NASSAU 247

11. (U) A banner headline April 20 captured the Bahamian media's coverage of Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham's attendance at the Summit of the Americas (SOA): "PM Lobbies U.S. on Tax Bill". All media prominently reported the PM's statement that The Bahamas did not deserve to be named as a secrecy jurisdiction in the "Stop Tax Haven Abuse Bill" pending before the U.S. Congress. The GCOB's strategy is to target Congress -- to wit: Ingraham said he had written Congressman Charles Rangel, Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, on behalf of CARICOM in advance of the SOA on this key issue for the GCOB. Ingraham has also reached out to Congressman Engel, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee on the Western Hemisphere, who also attended the SOA. PM Ingraham, who is also Minister of Finance, headed a GCOB delegation to the SOA that included Minister of National Security Tommy Turnquest and Minister of State for Finance Zhivargo Laing.

12. (SBU) Commenting on CARICOM leaders meeting with a congressional delegation led by Chairman Rangel at the SOA, PM Ingraham said "The U.S. congressmen were not able to provide justification" for The Bahamas being named in the bill. He reiterated that the GCOB has a Tax Information Exchange Agreement (TIEA) with the U.S., a point he also made to a visiting congressional delegation in Nassau April 9 (reftel). Concerns about off-shore finance overshadowed all other outcomes of the SOA in Bahamian media, including the political cartoons.

13. (U) A Nassau Guardian print editorial April 18, however, titled "Ball's now in Cuba's court", focused on the recent history of U.S.-Cuba relations and concluded: "It is now time for Cuba to do something tangible to show that it appreciates the good gestures made by President Obama, and it can start by changing some of the policies that deny Cubans freedoms enjoyed by citizens in democratic countries around the world." The Tribune daily published President Obama's op-ed "Choosing a better future in the Americas" April 18.
ZUNIGA-BROWN